

"Whatever sociology may be, it is the result of constantly asking the question, what is the meaning of this?"
C. Wright Mills

Understanding Human Society

SOC 2000

Wayne State University

Detroit, MI

Winter 2018

3 Credit Hours

Tuesday / Thursday 1pm – 2:15pm

State Hall, Room 0334

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Kik: MichaelSabbaghWSU

Campus Office Hours:

Tuesday: 11am – 1pm & by appointment

Office Location: 2264 Faculty Administration Building

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REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

OpenStax: Introduction to Sociology 2e

Free online textbook found at: <https://openstax.org/details/introduction-sociology-2e>

(direct link on Blackboard)

Additional readings to be passed out in class or available on Blackboard.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Introduction to Sociology! Whether you are a student passionate about sociology or one of the many who take their first sociology course with little idea of what it is, I hope that you will find this course to be engaging, exciting, informative and fun. I look forward to working with each one of you and sharing my love of the discipline. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to enhance your learning experiences in this course.

GOALS

Students who successfully complete this course will develop a rich understanding of the basics of sociology. This course is not focused on purely “factual” learning, or learning facts for the sake of facts. Rather, the focus will be on “conceptual” learning. It is more important to me that you walk away from this class understanding the complex relation of concepts in sociology than being able to recite the facts.

The goals for this course reflect the American Sociological Association's learning objectives for an introductory course to sociology: "[Introduction to] the discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social reality, such that the student will be able to: (a) describe how sociology differs from and is similar to other social sciences and to give examples of these

differences; (b) describe how sociology contributes to a liberal arts understanding of social reality; and (c) apply the sociological imagination, sociological principles, and concepts to her/his own life."

There are many times that we will problematize the definitions that we are learning, and understand the concepts for their strengths and some of their weaknesses. How do these concepts change meaning in time or space? With that being said, the main goal of this class is to learn concepts in sociology through a lens of critical thought, with a special eye towards issues of social justice.

Learning outcomes for this course

1. State and illustrate how the sociological imagination can assist in explaining your life.
2. Articulate the usefulness of sociological theory and research in your everyday experience.
3. Analyze how social structure operates and impacts our lives.
4. Understand the history and development of sociology as a field, how it fits within and relates to the other social sciences and other forms of scientific inquiry.
5. Recognize and demonstrate the importance of race, ethnicity, social class, and gender diversity in our society and the world.
6. An understanding of basic concepts in sociology.
7. An elementary knowledge of sociological research.
8. The capacity to evaluate the dynamics between cultures, the economy and politics.
9. Proficiency in reading and comprehending scholarly texts.
10. Develop internet and computer skills needed for college-level work.
11. Develop superb critical thinking skills and be able to think deeply about our social lives.
12. And, above all, enjoy yourself while accomplishing the above tasks.

EXPECTATIONS

Overview of Student Expectations

1. The core of all expectations for this course is **respect**. I expect that you will respect yourself, your fellow classmates, ideas presented in the classroom, diversity, the instructor and any guests to the classroom. Likewise, I pledge to respect you and your ideas.
2. I consider this classroom to be a safe space free of any types of hate. Any form of racism, sexism, misogyny, classism, ableism, fat/homo/transphobia or other kinds of bigotry will NOT be tolerated.
3. You are expected **to actively attend each scheduled class**. This means that you are to prepare thoroughly for each class, participate in the class discussion, actively listen and take notes.
4. **You will write your own assignments and cite all external sources.**
5. **All assignments will be completed with care and scholarly diligence.** Please use complete sentences, and run spelling/grammar check before turning in any assignments.

Note on Opinions vs. Facts

There may be times in class where it seems like we are having simple political conversations, just like one might have with their friends at the bar or while casually hanging out. In this class, you are not entitled to *opinions*; you *are* entitled to *facts* with evidence. Often our common-sense understandings of various social problems are, in fact, misaligned with reality. It is natural to have blinders towards others' struggles, which is something we all have to work to actively dismantle. I ask that you always stay open-minded to look at the issues discussed from different angles than you may be used to.

Instructor Expectations

I pledge to...

1. Be respectful of myself, students, ideas presented in class and classroom guests
2. Always be prepared for every class and to arrive on time
3. Offer a wide array of opportunities for students to be successful in this course
4. Exude excitement for topics presented in the course
5. Present, and be respectful of, differing viewpoints that I may personally disagree with
6. Offer my support
7. Be fair and reasonable
8. Be flexible when needed
9. Give more than adequate feedback on your performance in the class

Attendance Expectations

According to the Norwegian pop band D'Sound, "Bein' there is half the walk." Class discussion in this course is just as important as the readings and assignments, and, alas, if you are not in class, you cannot participate in class discussions. Students are expected to be in class on each day **on time**. See below for attendance and participation assessment for this course.

Number of Preparation Hours

As with any undergraduate course you will take, the calculation to determine the amount of time you need to spend on a course to be successful is to spend two hours outside of class for every hour in class. This is a three credit hour class, which means students should expect to spend **at least** six hours per week outside of class on readings, studying, assignments and journals.

Technology

Blackboard and Email

The use of Blackboard and Email is mandatory for this course. Using Blackboard, students are required to watch videos, take quizzes and exams, upload assignments and check their grades. Likewise, WSU email is the primary way I will communicate with you between class sessions. Please let me know if you have trouble with either of these platforms.

Phones

Don't be annoying. Put your phone on vibrate or turn it off during class. Don't even think about FaceTiming during class, though I may allow a stray selfie here and there. It is obvious when you're texting or looking at cat photos online with your phone in your lap. Please don't. It is annoying and disruptive. Please leave the classroom if you need to make or receive a call.

Laptops and Tablets

I do not encourage students to use laptops or tablets for notetaking during class. This isn't because I am opposed to technology in general, but these devices can be flirtatious monsters, inviting students to engage in non-class activities such as visiting other websites or checking e-mail, which can distract you and the people around you from what's going on in the classroom.

Voice Recorders

Personally I do not mind lectures being recorded but you will need to notify me before class starts if you'll be recording so I can announce it to the class.

OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENTS

If you are having difficulty in any stage of writing your essays for this or any of your courses, it is highly suggested that you use the resources WSU has to offer. Please visit the Writing Center in the Undergrad Library for assistance:

Writing Center

David Adamany Undergrad Library
Second Floor, Room 2310

Website: <http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing>

Online appointment scheduling:

<http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing/OnlineSchedulingInstructions>

Participation

Lectures will only cover *some* of the reading material that is assigned; it's imperative that you keep on top of assigned material and attend class in order to fully understand the material we will be discussing. Class is an interactive experience. Attendance and participation are both crucial to doing well in the course. Participation will be counted through the use of the online interaction service Kahoot! (kahoot.it). As such, students will need a smartphone, laptop or tablet to participate in the polling questions.

Quizzes & Exams

There will be two exams in the semester – one midterm and one final – and five short quizzes. Quizzes and exams will include multiple-choice, fill in the blank and true/false questions. The final will be cumulative, meaning that it will require you to be able to refer to any information discussed throughout the entire semester. Quizzes will include material covered in class since the last quiz.

The quizzes and exams will be administered online via Blackboard, each with a time restriction. Students should prepare for the quizzes and exams as if they're taken in the classroom setting so too much time is not wasted looking up responses for each question.

Students should make every effort to take each of the exams and quizzes on scheduled dates. In the event that a student needs to miss a quiz or exam for a documented reason, the student will need to alert the instructor ahead of time to work out a make-up date. This will be completed on an agreed upon date with the student and instructor, and handled on a case-by-case basis.

Reflection Essays

Students are expected to write two, one – two page reflexive essay throughout the semester, due by Friday on the weeks indicated below. You will submit the short essays via an assignment link on Blackboard (no emails please), and the files must be in **PDF or Word format only**. The essays can about anything related to the readings, lectures, personal anecdotes, what you liked or didn't like and so on. I will accept these essays late with a two point per day penalty. The essays are worth 20 points each so it is in your best interest to get them in on time. Think of these essays as an opportunity to speak directly to me where you can reflect on the class.

Critical Film Discussions

We will watch and discuss four films in class that explore some of the various weeks' themes. There will be a worksheet with questions to facilitate discussion afterwards that will fulfill the assignment requirements. Let me know ahead of time if you are unable to attend the class that day for some form of make-up assignment.

Extra Credit

Students have several options for earning extra credit in this course. Please note that no extra credit is accepted the final week of class and I typically do not accept essays for extra credit without prior consultation. I will accept a max of two extra credit assignments worth up to 10 points each:

1. Students may review a newspaper or journal article related to class topic with a short (1-2 paragraph) explanation of how it is relevant to our class discussions.
2. Attend an activity, presentation or exhibition on a topic that relates to something we've covered or will cover in class. Then, write up a 1-2 page review on this activity, presentation or exhibition.

EVALUATION OF ASSESSMENTS

Your performance in this course will be evaluated in the following manner:

Participation/Attendance: 25 points

Reflection Essays: 20 points each * 2 essays – 40 points total

Critical Film Discussions 15 points each * 4 films – 60 points total

Quizzes: 15 points each * 5 quizzes – 75 points total

Midterm Exam: 100 points

Final Exam: 100 points

Total: 400 points

Grading Scale

| | | | |
|------------|----|-----------|----|
| 100% - 90% | A | 72% - 70% | C |
| 89% - 86% | A- | 69% - 66% | C- |
| 85% - 83% | B+ | 65% - 63% | D+ |
| 82% - 80% | B | 62% - 60% | D |
| 79% - 76% | B- | 59% - 51% | D- |
| 75% - 73% | C+ | | |

Anything below this threshold will receive a failure for the course.

Note: I will be diligent about getting grades up on Blackboard in a timely fashion. It is up to each student to keep track of her or his marks as the semester goes on. Let me know if you have concerns about your point total or if you are having problems in the course. Do not wait until the last minute to inquire about your grade.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Accommodation Statement

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TDD only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your needs. Student Disability Services' mission is to "assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University." Please refer to the SDS website for further information about students with disabilities and the services provided for students: <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>

Plagiarism Statement

Assignments that have been copied from another student or another source will not be scored. All papers will be run through the SafeAssign plagiarism system which detects attempts at copying text. "Academic misbehavior means any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution or subvert the education process. All forms of academic misbehavior are prohibited at Wayne State University, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct." (*WSU Dean of Students Office Statement, 2014*). The following website gives the university's full policy on academic integrity: <http://doso.wayne.edu/academic-integrity.html>

I understand there are many gray areas when it comes to plagiarism. Don't hesitate to contact me or stop by during office hours if you have questions or need guidance.

A Final Note

Due to the nature of this course, some topics discussed in class may be controversial, uncomfortable or lead to heated debates. Learning something new isn't always comfortable and often our personal judgments cloud our ability to learn to the fullest. Please try to keep those judgments outside of the 'classroom' and focus on gaining new knowledge while in class or reading the assigned texts. If you have strong feelings about anything brought up in class by either your fellow classmates or me, please feel free to make an appointment to come speak with me. I am more than willing to listen to your concerns.

The instructor may make changes to this course outline as needed during the semester. Please be attentive for possible modifications and regularly check your Wayne State email.

COURSE TIMELINE

| DATE | TOPIC | READING/ASSIGNMENT |
|---|--|--|
| <i>Week 1 - Introductions</i> | | |
| Tues Jan 9 | Introductions + Syllabus Review | <NONE> |
| Thurs Jan 11 | An Introduction to Sociology | OpenStax, Chapter 1 |
| <i>Week 2 - Foundations</i> | | |
| Tues Jan 16 | Sociological Research | OpenStax, Chapter 2 |
| Thurs Jan 18 | Groups & Organization | OpenStax, Chapter 6 |
| Fri Jan 19 | | 1st Quiz on Blackboard |
| <i>Week 3 – Culture & Media</i> | | |
| Tues Jan 23 | Culture | OpenStax, Chapter 3 |
| Thurs Jan 25 | Film & Discussion: <i>Generation Like</i> | <NONE> |
| <i>Week 4 – Socialization</i> | | |
| Tues Jan 30 | Socialization | OpenStax, Chapter 5 |
| Thurs Feb 1 | Film & Discussion: <i>Jesus Camp</i> | <NONE> |
| Fri Feb 2 | | 2nd Quiz on Blackboard |
| <i>Week 5 – Social Institutions</i> | | |
| Tues Feb 6 | Marriage & Family | OpenStax, Chapter 14 |
| Thurs Feb 8 | Religion | OpenStax, Chapter 15 |
| Fri Feb 9 | | 3rd Quiz on Blackboard |
| <i>Week 6 – Social Control</i> | | |
| Tues Feb 13 | Social Control, Crime & Deviance | OpenStax, Chapter 7 |
| Thurs Feb 15 | Know Your Rights Training | <NONE> |
| Fri Feb 16 | | |
| <i>Week 7 – Gender, Sex & Sexuality</i> | | |
| Tues Feb 20 | Gender, Sex & Sexuality | OpenStax, Chapter 12 |
| Thurs Feb 22 | Consent | Readings on Blackboard |
| Fri Feb 23 | | 4th Quiz on Blackboard |
| <i>Week 8 – Health and Society</i> | | |
| Tues Feb 27 | Health and Medicine | OpenStax, Chapter 19 |
| Thurs Mar 1 | Guest Lecture: Planned Parenthood of SE MI | <NONE> |
| Fri Mar 2 | | 1st Essay Due |
| <i>Week 9 – Midterm</i> | | |
| Tues Mar 6 | Midterm Review | <NONE> |
| Thurs Mar 8 | Midterm Exam | |
| SPRING BREAK: MARCH 12 – MARCH 17 | | |
| <i>Week 10 - Inequality</i> | | |
| Tues Mar 20 | Stratification | OpenStax, Chapter 9 |
| Thurs Mar 22 | Global Inequality | OpenStax, Chapter 10 |
| <i>Week 11 – Race</i> | | |
| Tues Mar 27 | Race & Ethnicity | OpenStax, Chapter 11 |
| Thurs Mar 29 | Contemporary Racial Discourse | Readings on Blackboard |
| Fri Mar 30 | | 5th Quiz on Blackboard |

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <i>Week 12 – Identity Politics</i> | | |
| Tues Apr 3 | Intersectionality | Readings on Blackboard |
| Thurs Apr 5 | Film & Discussion: <i>Paris is Burning</i> | <NONE> |
| <i>Week 13 – Social Movements and Civil Rights</i> | | |
| Tues Apr 10 | Social Movements and Social Change | OpenStax, Chapter 21 |
| Thurs Apr 12 | Film & Discussion: <i>American Revolutionary</i> | Readings on Blackboard |
| Fri Apr 13 | | 2nd Essay Due |
| <i>Week 14 – Final</i> | | |
| Tues Apr 17 | Final Review | <NONE> |
| Thurs Apr 19 | Final Exam | |

IMPORTANT DATES

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| January 15 | University closed: Martin Luther King Day |
| January 22 | Last day to drop course without tuition penalty |
| February 4 | Last day to drop course without instructor approval |
| March 8 | Midterm Exam |
| March 12 – March 17 | University closed: Spring Break |
| March 25 | Last day to drop course with instructor approval |
| April 15 | Last day to submit assignments |
| April 19 | Final Exam |

Beginning of class questionnaire

Instructions: Briefly fill in the following information anonymously so I can have idea of the class composition. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME OR IDENTIFYING INFO!!** This helps me as the instructor shape future lessons and see where everyone is at. You can make responses as short or long as you'd like, or ignore questions you don't feel like answering.

What year student are you? Have you decided on a major and/or minor? What is it?

How do you identify your gender (man, woman, trans, non-binary, genderqueer etc)?

How do you identify your race or ethnicity?

How do you identify politically (liberal, conservative, progressive, socialist, libertarian, etc)?

Do you live in the cities of Detroit, Hamtramck or Highland Park?

What is a social problem you feel most passionate about?

What is a social problem you wish you had better understanding of?

What do you hope to gain from this class, besides 3 credit hours and a social science credit?